

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Before I consider it further, I would like to ask Senator Warner a question, and if he doesn't have the answer, anybody who can answer it for me.

PRESIDENT: Senator Warner is available.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: I may misunderstand, Senator Warner, what is entailed here so can you tell me what the program is and how it will be carried out at Beatrice, should it be moved there, and why the decision was made?

SENATOR WARNER: Senator Chambers, the individuals involved are individuals that are both mentally handicapped and mentally ill and there is about 20 or so individuals. You may recall there was a...or you maybe did not know...there was a study, task force type thing, last year, this summer, that reviewed each of those individual's cases and we did put an amendment into the appropriation bill that authorized the Department of Institutions in their judgment to perhaps place some of those individuals as a result of that task force. Some could be in the community setting conceivably depending upon the level of handicap and mental illness, and others would have to remain institutionalized. The suggestion was one that was on the DPI's list or the Governor's list early on as a possibility. What we are doing here is, and the dollar amount is their recognition of a saving, is that those who can still be placed as an alternative which is more economical would still be able to be done. The balance, in fact, would be moved to Beatrice. The reason that you incur the substantial savings by going to Beatrice is the fact that they are...within their budget, they can handle these additional people and they are under their prescribed number of beds, number of individuals there, and still qualify so there is no Medicaid or any of those other federal program problems with reimbursement. So the care should be comparable to what they are currently receiving. So between the two alternatives, the proposal is that this kind of a reduction could be made without adversely affecting the individuals. That is how it is represented to us.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Thank you, Senator Warner. Members of the Legislature, this is going to be a day when you all can punish me because I am dealing with programs that I have a great deal of feeling about and I am going to have the flesh